

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Applicants appreciate the Examiner's thorough search and examination of the present patent application.

Applicants further note with appreciation the Examiner's indication that claims 3, 4, 8, 9, 16 and 17 would be allowable if rewritten to overcome rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, and to include all of the limitations of the base claim and intervening claims. Accordingly, applicants have amended claims 3, 4, 8, 9, 16 and 17 to place the claims in condition for allowance.

Claims 1 and 2 have been canceled without prejudice. Dependent claims 5, 6, 7, and 10-15 have been amended to depend directly or indirectly from allowed claim 3 or claim 4.

New claims 18 and 19 have been added to provide applicants with additional protection to which they appear to be entitled. No new matter has been added. Applicants believe the amendments to these claims make explicit that which was already implicit, and accordingly, are not made for statutory purposes for patentability.

Claims 1-17 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention. As noted above, claims 1 and 2 have been canceled, and claims 3-17 have been amended to place the claims in condition for allowance. Reconsideration is respectfully requested.

Claims 1, 2, 10, 11, 12 and 15 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by the German reference (27049). Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection.

Claims 1 and 2 have been canceled. As noted above, claims 3 and 4 are amended to overcome the Examiner's rejection under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph and are believed to be in condition for allowance. Claims 10-12 depend directly or indirectly from claim 3, and are, therefore patentable for the same reason, as well as because of the combination of features in those claims with the features set forth in the claim(s) from which they depend. Claim 15 depends directly from claim 4, and is, therefore, also patentable for the same reason as well as because of the features in claim 15 in combination with the features set forth in claim 4.

Claims 1, 2, 5, 10, 11, and 15 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by the Miller (U.S. Patent No. 3,362,392). Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection.

Claims 1 and 2 have been canceled. Claims 3 and 4 are amended to overcome the Examiner's rejection under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph and are believed to be in condition for allowance. Claims 10 and 11 depend directly or indirectly from claim 3, and are, therefore patentable for the same reason, as well as because of the combination of features in those claims with the features set forth in the claim(s) from which they depend. Claims 5 and 15 depend directly from claim 4, and are, therefore, patentable for the same reason as well as because of the features in those claims with the features set forth in claim 4.

This application is believed to be in condition for allowance, which action is earnestly solicited.

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Name of applicant, assignee or
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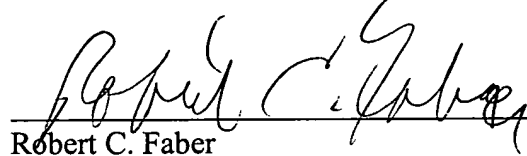
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August 3, 2004

Date of Signature

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Respectfully submitted,



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